

# RealSelf<sup>®</sup> MEMBER GUIDES

Edited by  
Sharon, a  
RealSelf  
Moderator



## 18 Things I Wish I Knew Before Getting Invisalign

**Sharon** is our **Invisalign** moderator. She developed this list based on first-hand Invisalign experiences reported by members of the RealSelf community.

### 1) Choosing a Provider

I would recommend finding an ORTHODONTIST versus a DENTIST for better results... especially a Premier Provider that has lots of experience. - [polotab](#)

### 2) The Price

No matter who's the doc, you won't find anyone less than \$5k for a full Invisalign treatment. Now, the Invisalign Express easily runs under \$2k, but it's only applicable for cases that can be treated with 10 aligners or less. Also, see if the price will include the retainers you'll need to wear after the treatment. - [mixa](#)

If you have orthodontic insurance through your dental plan, it will typically cover some of this treatment. Mine paid for half and I got a discount for paying cash with my orthodontist, so the cost wasn't bad at all. - [polotab](#)

### 3) Is Invisalign Right for Me?

If you're not going to commit to wearing them for approximately 22 hours per day, don't bother having the treatment. It's similar to training for a marathon or studying all semester; if you skimp on the process, you won't get results in the end, and it'll be a waste of time and money. - [mars](#)

Keep in mind that Invisalign is mainly a product used for cosmetic purposes, and discuss with your orthodontist if you need also to address structural issues with your appliance. Invisalign is very good in some instances, but in cases where there are existing bite problems it should not be used. If you're getting them because you don't want the look of wire braces, consider that wire braces may do a much better job, and are much more adaptable to different mouth and bite conditions than Invisalign, and reconsider your reservations about wire. Don't get sucked in by what looks easy -- do your homework (get multiple opinions before you commit to an orthodontic course of action), and find out what will work best both for cosmetic and for structural reasons. Invisalign is definitely one answer, and not always the best one. - [Simon6](#)

## Real Facts

Data below derived from RealSelf reviews at time of publication. Click on the respective facts to learn more.

Average Cost  
**\$4,700**

Worth It  
Rating  
**78%**

Total Reviews  
**488**

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Invisalign actually does address bites... its the orthodontist that doesn't. There are a few ways they deal with over/under bites and such. One way is they attach rubber bands to attachments, which pulls the jaw into the direction it needs to... and another way is having traditional braces stuck to the back few teeth with a spring which pulls the jaw into place. - [Rosieeee](#)

I would ask to see the virtual picture of the final product before committing to it. My top teeth were almost perfect and one of my bottom middle teeth was slightly rotated. I did not see what the final product would look like until last week and I was caught off guard when I saw that my top and bottom teeth would not line up perfectly. Apparently that is only something braces with elastics can do and Invisalign can't -- something my orthodontist failed to mention. So, if you are looking for perfection like I was, it is only something traditional braces can achieve, and not Invisalign. - [alicia123](#)

### 4) Going Through the Process

The current recommendation is 18 days between trays. The latter part of this time is for the teeth to "firm up" in their new positions, so you don't see any change, but it's necessary to be patient. You can cause root damage if you aren't. If you are seeing a reputable Invisalign service provider, you will not have received all of your trays at once! You should get them in sets of three or four, and have to go into the office for a checkup to get the next sets. Part of what you are paying for is monitoring by a service provider. - [California Crookedteeth](#)

### 5) What Does It Feel Like?

Everyday I eat they become less noticeable and have not irritated the inside of my mouth like the orthodontist said they may. They feel like pieces of chunky peanut butter stuck on my teeth. I feel the retainer pushing on my teeth but there has been no pain. Just slight tenderness if I push the teeth being adjusted to the side. No pain whatsoever when eating, although I do enjoy removing the retainer a few times a day to eat. That I feel is a big advantage to traditional braces. When the retainer is in I notice it less every day. The first few days I had an oral fixation on it and examined the edges of the retainer constantly with my tongue -- DO NOT DO THIS -- just leave it alone. The tip of my tongue has become very scratched and sore. - [Droo](#)

When I first got the trays, the first few days are the WORST and it's hard to get used to. I was regretting my decision at first. It is pretty painful because your teeth are moving and it feels like a vice grip on your jaw. But the pain subsides with a day or 2 and ibuprofen really helps. When I switch aligner trays after 2 weeks, I always do so in the evening with an ibuprofen, and I am fine. - [polotab](#)

### 6) Will People Notice Them?

The first week or so I was extremely self conscious in general, thinking that I looked like a freak with my new plastic teeth. But now I have to say that I love them, am not shy about smiling and absolutely love to tell people all about my experience thus far! - [vj2009](#)

I cannot overstate the aesthetic value of having "clear braces" over a year. No one, and I mean no one, could tell I had them on unless I mentioned it. It may be the right solution for you depending on your occupation or personal preference. - [KoolAidSmile](#)

### 7) Kissing with Invisalign

Kiss your social life (and romantic life) goodbye until the trays are gone. They give you bad breath, make you speak oddly, discolor your teeth, and make most people clench their mouths to hide their teeth so that they look unpleasant. - [California Crookedteeth](#)

As far as kissing, I do feel a little self conscious about it but that won't stop me! - [vj2009](#)

### 8) Speaking of Social Situations...

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I was only affected with a lisp with my first set and only for a day or so. In my opinion, they are well worth it. - [jackster212](#)

My speech has not really been affected. They said I may have a lisp for a bit -- but I think I speak pressing my tongue to the back of the palate rather than the front so I think my speech is less affected. - [Droo](#)

My sons noticed my lisp right away. We just laughed about it. They were very happy that my teeth were getting taken care of. - [6905anon](#)

Speech is slightly impaired with certain syllables -- like "F" and "V", but it's not major. I would choose Invisalign any day over traditional braces. - [polotab](#)

### 9) Invisalign Attachments

Not everyone gets the attachments put on their teeth. I have seven and my brother has none. No, they don't hurt when they are being put on but they are kind of annoying; and I think that's what makes the Invisalign noticeable. I might as well have metal in my mouth with the number of people that come up and ask me what's on my teeth. My brother's you don't notice at all, but he has no attachments. - [Juliana](#)

I have the buttons and they are very irritating. I began to wonder if they were put on for the sole purpose of making sure you didn't keep your trays out of your mouth too long because if you do, you can't stand the irritation on the inside of your mouth. I'm halfway through treatment and feel the worst is over. It was terrible getting used to them in the beginning. It's a lot of plastic in your mouth. - [Smiley hopeful](#)

I have put some orthodontist wax on the buttons when I take the trays out to ease up on the scratchiness and it has worked wonders! I have only swallowed a tiny bit of wax and am still alive! - [izzybizzy](#)

I suspect that most of you who describe the Invisalign buttons as "terrible" and "irritating" never had to deal with old-fashioned braces. (I'd had conventional braces as a teen, but 40 years later, my bottom teeth were terribly misaligned again.) I got headaches and mouth ulcers and less-than-charming breath under both systems, but all the pain and annoyance and embarrassment was far, far, far worse with conventional braces than with Invisalign. - [iolanthe](#)

### 10) What's It Like to Have Your Teeth Filed?

I had to have two teeth filed. It didn't hurt at all -- just more of an uncomfortable weird feeling to see them filing my teeth with something that looked like a nail file! - [yj2009](#)

I opted not to file my teeth -- I was not pressured to -- only told I may have a slight gap. We'll see. I don't need perfect teeth, just a nice looking smile. If there is a gap and it bothers me, I can always see what my options are then to fix it. - [Droo](#)

### 11) How to Care for Your Aligners

Soak them briefly in a solution of half Listerine and half water twice a week, and then brush them with a small amount of toothpaste to keep them clean. Besides killing germs, the Listerine will color the gunk on the trays that you can't see, and you can brush it off. If you have trouble with rough edges on the trays, use the softer side of an emory board to smooth them. - [California Crookedteeth](#)

I quit brushing mine and started washing them with Dial antibacterial soap and a washcloth or my hands. They seemed to get cleaner that way and didn't get scratched. - [hlatanta](#)

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I use a metal fingernail file to smooth rough areas. You may need to use an exacto knife to trim first, being careful not to cut into the area where the tooth sits. - [mlb](#)

I also found that using a nail file on the buttons to make them smoother really helps. They were so sharp initially when I took the trays out that I was getting big sores in my mouth. I smoothed them down slightly with a file and I got BIG RELIEF. It seems gross but so worth it! - [polotab](#)

### 12) Eating and Drinking

I am getting use to scheduling my meals and the only major drawback is I enjoy drinking a few beers a night -- so now instead of slowly enjoying them I drink them much more quickly so that I do not go more than a half hour without the retainer in. They said I need to average 20 hours a day with it in. The closer to 24 hours a day the better, so I try to get as close as reasonably possible to that. - [Droo](#)

Eating is a challenge when they have to be removed each time. But a person gets used to it and it's great hygiene to brush 5 times a day. It makes my dentist visits so easy! - [polotab](#)

Drink loads of water -- the trays make your mouth dry and irritated, which will encourage bacteria. - [California Crookedteeth](#)

I do drink tea pretty much non-stop (I work nights) and as long as you drink it through a straw, I have had no problems at all. My trays get a little discolored in the back where the tea hits them but it brushes right off. -[izzybizzy](#)

Don't drink anything but water with them. Anything dark will stain them and it's just gross to have liquid in between the trays and your teeth. - [hlatlanta](#)

### 13) The "Invisalign Diet"

The only adjustment to them is my eating habits. Which have been a good thing. I didn't realize how often I would eat and drink just because it was there. Now having to deal with my tray and brushing my teeth... I feel like I've been forced to do the Invisalign Diet! In only four months I've lost 8lbs! When this all over I'll have good teeth & be super skinny. - [M McEachran](#)

I did not realize how much I was snacking but I have lost something like 5lb in two weeks. - [sips](#)

### 14) Oral Hygiene

I have found that Listerine, brushing, and floss after each meal works well for me. My advice for anyone debating or starting -- go to Costco and pick up a ten-pack of tooth brushes, floss, and mouthwash. I even don't notice the Invisalign trays when my mind is on doing work or something else. Brushing, flossing, and mouthwash is five minutes, three times a day -- big deal... I do not want cavities or bad breath problems. The fact you can take them out to eat and clean makes the trays a 1,000 times better than traditional braces. -[Droo](#)

No matter how often you brush your teeth your mouth will dry out (most of the saliva collects in the trays which end up feeling slimy), and feel dirty and smell less than fresh. Constantly brushing your teeth and sipping water helps, but not always an option. Your lips also get chapped. Had I really understood the inconvenience and gross factor, I would not have done it based on that alone. - [kaths](#)

You have to be crazy about oral hygiene but why not start good habits now? - [vj2009](#)

### 15) Teeth Whitening

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I switched to AIM toothpaste as it was rated #1 by Consumer Reports for whitening and actually had three people ask me last week if I had my teeth bleached! NO, I just brush them up to ten million times a day now! I am a snacker so I do brush a lot now! - [izzybizzy](#)

My teeth are whiter these days! I think it's probably because after brushing my teeth at night (with a toothpaste that says "Whitening" on it) and putting the trays back on, there's toothpaste residue either on my teeth or in the trays (I brush those as well, to keep them clean) and overnight, they act as teeth bleaching trays and voila! Whiter teeth! - [maharichie](#)

### 16) Removing the Aligners

They are near impossible to remove with attachments. To help with this get yourself an aligner remover tool called an Outie on Amazon -- a set of three for \$5. You need all three so that you can leave one in the car, one in your pocket, etc. They are a lifesaver and well worth the cash. - [addierocks](#)

### 17) Follow-up Visits

The chair time at the orthodontist is minimal. Every eight weeks makes for only a handful of visits and they are super quick. - [polotab](#)

### 18) After Invisalign

I will need permanent retainers to keep my teeth in place afterwards but should be much easier than the trays. Overall I would recommend this for adults as an alternative to wire braces! - [polotab](#)

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